private key, and public key corresponding to the private key, said method comprising:

receiving via the network a user's ID;

reading from a storage means data corresponding to the user having the received ID, which data comprises the user's private key encrypted using a key determined from identifying information of the user;

C1

sending via the network the encrypted private key, whereby the encrypted private key can be received and decrypted at the location of the user using the user's identifying information;

receiving a digital signature manifesting the user's approval of a document, which digital signature represents a computed hash of the approved document encrypted using the user's private key; and

verifying the received digital signature by decrypting the digital signature using the user's public key and comparing the result of this decrypting with an independently computed hash of the document.

C2

11. (Twice Amended) A system for administering private keys and corresponding public keys for a plurality of users, comprising:

computer readable storage means and

a server,

characterized in that:

the storage means includes therein respective IDs and encrypted private keys for the respective users which private keys have been encrypted using respective keys determined from respective user identifying information, and

the server is configured:

to read an encrypted private key from the storage means associated with an ID corresponding to a particular user,

to transmit the encrypted private key to the particular user,

to receive a digital signature manifesting the user's approval of a document, which digital signature represents a computed hash of the approved document encrypted using the user's private key, and

to verify the received digital signature by decrypting the digital signature using the user's public key and comparing the result of this decrypting with an independently computed hash of the document.

13. (Amended) A system as claimed in Claim 11, characterized in that there is further stored in the

storage means the respective public keys corresponding to the private keys for the respective users.

C3

14. (Amended) A system as claimed in Claim 12, characterized in that there is further stored in the storage means the respective public keys corresponding to the private keys for the respective users.

C4

15. (Twice Amended) A system as claimed in Claim 11, characterized in that

the server is further configured

to decrypt data received from the particular user using the public key.

C5

16. (Twice Amended) A system as claimed in Claim 12, characterized in that

the server is further configured

to decrypt data received from the particular user using the public key.